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No Need to Keep Cuba Waiting.

The country has entered on another week of waiting for the official announcement of the findings of the Court of Inquiry. The strain of suspense is wearing out the patience of Congress, and all the efforts of the Administration are exerted toward preventing hasty action.

But why should the whole Cuban question wait for the verdict in the case of the Maine? We already know all that is to be known about the condition of Cuba. The Court of Inquiry can add nothing to that. Nothing has happened since the destruction of the Maine to alter the situation there, except that forty thousand Cuban women and children have starved to death while the divers have been trying to discover whether our two hundred and fifty sailors were blown up or blew themselves up.

It would be advantageous in every way to settle the fate of Cuba before dealing with the disaster to the Maine. The explosion in the bay of Havana was an incident of the general welter of anarchy that prevails wherever the Cuban Republic is not in full possession of its territory. If we put it in possession there will be no more such incidents, and it will be easy to reach a satisfactory arrangement with Spain about that one.

If Spain will concede the independence of Cuba she will concede suitable reparation for the loss of the Maine. If she will not consent to Cuban independence, it makes no difference what she may do about the Maine; we shall have to fight her in any case. It is best to get the question of chief difficulty and chief urgency out of the way first.

If we should demand suitable reparation for the loss of the Maine, and Spain should concede all we asked, the Cuban question would still remain as threatening as ever, unless our demand took the form of a requirement that Cuba should be free. If we insist upon Cuban independence to begin with, and Spain refuses, the resulting collision will give us a chance to collect in our own way all the indemnity we care to have for the loss of the Maine. The greater will include the less.

Congress has waited a month too long for the report of the Court of Inquiry. It has been misled by the intimations that the affair of the Maine would be quickly disposed of. There is only one reason for making Cuba wait until a policy with regard to the Havana explosion has been decided upon, and that is that in the meantime preparations for defence may be completed.

But that work has been sufficiently done. We are strong enough now to dispose of any fleet Spain can send against us, and our coast cities are secure even against an attack by a stronger naval power than Spain might conceivably secure as an ally. We can occupy Havana to-morrow, if we choose, and Spain is powerless either to prevent us or to revenge the act. Let us do at once what lies before us. Let Congress declare without further delay that the Republic of Cuba is a free, sovereign and independent State, one of the family of American nations whose immunity from European aggressions is guaranteed by the Monroe Doctrine. Then the horrors of reconcentration will cease, and the deliberate processes of diplomacy in dealing with the questions still left open will no longer be a crime,

### The Spectacle in Cuba.

Within a few days, as fast as railroads and steamships can carry it, there will be American food in Cuba for every destitute person. A whole starving people will be fed by another people. For the first time in history one nation will be taking sole and complete care of the charges of another.

Other famous relief movements have succeeded many, but this feeds all.

The very Spanish press admits it and is bitter over the fact. *La Lucha* says:

"We have been unable to find in history a case of one State sustaining the necessities of another State."

What the Spaniards hate intensely, and what the most brilliant Havana daily is the first paper to confess, is, as *La Lucha* puts it, "not that starving Cubans are being made well, but that they are being made into Americans."

That paper continued: "A stomachful of corn meal is a stronger bid for allegiance than twenty thousand bannered forts and two hundred thousand soldiers. And the fact that American bacon and cornmeal are now as general over Cuba as Spanish flags and bayonets makes the Cuban feeling universal."

The Spanish papers have been virulently attacking American charity for some time. All have repeatedly made the point that in feeding all the hungry Cubans, America is making a permanent and great pauper class.

This is the one great fact used by all to force the liberal minded Gen. Blanco to curtail the privileges already granted and to refuse any new requests.

This clamor has caused the Captain General to decide not to allow the Americans to completely cure the ill. He now refuses to allow the hungry to work, refuses to permit Cubans to use American tools and American bought seed in raising their own food.

Cuban soil is not to be allowed to support Cubans. Spain will condemn every one of the destitute to die unless she permits American charity to continue. Spain forces the very thing she objects to by refusing to allow Cubans to support themselves.

Blanco seems to have been compelled to outdo Weyler. Weyler established zones of cultivation about the concentrated towns, but Blanco so far has refused to let the American Cuban Relief Committee put tools and seeds in the reconcentrados' hands.

Were Weyler's zones of cultivation only cultivated, were the people allowed to help themselves, American charity would soon become superfluous in Cuba. There would be no pauper class, as indeed there never was on the rich Cuba soil in peace times, and the Spaniards could then demand the withdrawal of outside assistance without insulting humanity.

### Spain's Crowning Crime.

It cannot be forgotten that the terrible starvation and death in Cuba are neither an unavoidable consequence of war nor the result of an inability of the inhabitants to feed themselves.

The dreadful scenes depicted and verified by Senator Proctor are due directly to a deliberate policy adopted by Weyler and sanctioned by Spain.

"Exterminate that breed!" was the watchword of that remorseless butcher.

And so the inhabitants of the productive fields and plantations, who not only supported themselves, but contributed the greater part of the food supplies to the cities and towns of the island, were, in Senator Proctor's words, "driven into the fortified towns and held there to subsist as they can"—in other words, to starve.

"All the country people in the four western provinces," says the Senator, "about 400,000 in number, were driven into these fortified towns." And he says of their condition:

Torn from their homes, with foul earth, foul water and foul food or none, what wonder that one-half have died and that one-quarter of the living are so diseased that they cannot be saved? Deaths in the streets have not been uncommon. I was told by one of our consuls that people have been found dead about the markets in the morning, where they had crawled hoping to get some stray bits of food from the early butchers, and that there had been cases where they had dropped dead inside the market, surrounded by food.

The Senator adds that his inquiries were made of "our medical officers, our consuls, of the mayors and relief committees of the towns, of leading citizens, often Spanish born," and that "every time came

the answer that the case had not been overstated." In three provinces alone—

Two hundred thousand had died within these Spanish forts, practically prison walls, within a few months past, from actual starvation and disease caused by insufficient and improper food.

The Senator summed up his conclusion in the memorable words: "It is neither peace nor war: it is concentration and desolation and death."

And the crime of it is that this wholesale slow murder of the Cubans is cold blooded and deliberate. Because Spain's greatest generals and her 200,000 soldiers could not subdue or kill 30,000 or 40,000 insurgents fighting for freedom, this "proud," this "chivalrous," this "sensitive" nation sanctioned the policy of starving to death 400,000 non-combatants in order to "exterminate the breed."

It is this crime against civilization, perpetrated within ninety miles of our shores, that will, in the opinion of even the most conservative men at Washington, compel and justify intervention in the interest of humanity, freedom and peace.

### Searching for Andree.

The announcement that an expedition is presently to be started in search of Andree will recall forcibly to the public mind the peculiar hardihood and bravery of the three men who risked their lives in search of the North Pole. Save for a note brought back by a carrier pigeon in July of last year, says the *Chicago Record*, not a word has been heard of the party which took the balloon from Danes Island. In spite of numerous rumors, it has become pretty well understood that Andree and his two comrades, if still alive, are in a location inaccessible until the breaking of the winter season. Andree carried provisions on which the party could subsist for a period of nine months. In other words, if the party has been able to make a landing somewhere on the ice pack of the far North its members would be able to keep alive until some time next month, and in all probability even longer. But as to the site where the balloon likely drifted there is no way of telling. According to the testimony of those who are best able to judge of the matter the balloon must have descended into the sea, the aeronauts being drowned, or, in case of exceptional good fortune, come down upon Franz Josef land. If they were able to make a landing there without accident there is still a chance that they are safe and will be found somewhere near Cape Flora when the spring opens. In any event they will be without provisions in a very few weeks and the present rescuing expedition is a necessity if the explorers are still living.

It may be many months before the actual facts are known, but there is little justification for the hope that Andree and his brave companions are still living. The chances are that they perished somewhere in the drifting ice of the Arctic Ocean, and it is not unlikely that their fate may remain a mystery for the rest of time.

### What the Golden Tide Means.

The enormous sums of gold that are coming to us on both sides of the continent—more than a million a day since Feb. 25—are a source of national strength far too little appreciated.

They add largely to the ability of the people to support the Government in case of need.

They greatly increase the volume of money in the country, every dollar meaning, as a bank reserve, from four to six dollars of available money with which to meet the needs of commerce.

They mean that the country as a whole is buying far less than it is selling; that it is living far within its means—a circumstance that is as suggestive of thrift and prosperity in the case of a nation as it is in the case of an individual.

They mean that our national credit and the credit of all our enterprises are unimpaired in foreign markets. Otherwise American securities—national, municipal, State, railroad and industrial—would now be flowing in upon us from timid foreign holders, and we should be exporting gold to pay for them.

At a season when we usually export gold, and with a "war scare" on, we are still importing gold in phenomenal quantities. The fact is reassuring in an extraordinary degree.

Pending the report of the Maine Court of Inquiry and the President's message, Congress and the people are confronted with a series of puzzling ifs.

It can do no harm to consider them. Difficulties recognized and thought through are half conquered.

If the Court of Inquiry reports, as anticipated, that the Maine was destroyed as the result of an initial outside explosion, what then?

If official Spanish complicity could be imagined or, more impossible yet, proved, the case would be clear. Such a destruction of the Maine would be an act of war, and would be met as such. But—

If, as is most likely, the verdict shall be that the first explosion was from a cause and source unknown, the question then becomes one of Spain's accountability. There is no precedent to guide us. If the destruction of the Maine was a crime, it has no parallel. If it was an accident, it has no companion. Foreign authorities on international law, and some of the highest in our own country—including ex-Minister Phelps—hold that neither a foreign Government nor its local authorities insure the protection or are responsible for the safety of war vessels in their harbors.

The establishing and general recognition of such a rule might lead to some strange results. Under it the war vessel of any nation—England, France, Germany, Russia, Spain—could be destroyed with impunity in any harbor of the world if the ingenuity of the assassins could circumvent the watchfulness of the crew. Are we ready to accept such a law? Are the naval powers of the world willing to set it up and stand by it?

If, on the contrary, we maintain that the fact that the Maine was moored under the direct orders of the Spanish authorities and that the existence of a mine or a torpedo of sufficient force to have caused the destruction could not have been beyond their knowledge, must we not demand reparation for the deed and security for the future so far as Cuba is involved?

If we make this demand, and Spain shall refuse to acknowledge any responsibility in the matter, what then? Shall we name an ultimatum, and after a stipulated time proceed to enforce it? In other words, shall we make war, or submit the question to arbitration?

Back of and above the Maine incident is the whole Cuban question. If we are to put a stop to the horrible barbarities in that unhappy island, and are to admit that we have as a nation a duty to humanity and to freedom in that connection, how are we to proceed? Is recognition either of belligerency or of independence any longer adequate? Shall we intervene? If so, how and to what extent?

This is the greatest if of all.

### Comforting for New York.

No hostile fleet can approach New York near enough to throw a shell into it. This much is certain as a physical fact.

Sandy Hook lies twenty-one miles from the Battery. The longest practicable range for any naval gun is six miles. The longest theoretical range is twelve miles, and there is not a gun in any fleet that could secure an elevation sufficient for a twelve mile range, or that could endure for more than two or three shots if the elevation were obtained. Those shots might fall somewhere in the market gardens near Coney Island. They could never reach further.

But this is supposing that a fleet could lie at Sandy Hook. It can't. It must lie at least six or eight miles outside of Sandy Hook or be blown out of the water. That is to say, its nearest approach to the Battery must be twenty-eight or thirty miles away. It might as well be at Cadiz so far as offensive operations are concerned.

Sandy Hook bristles with big guns and 12 inch rifle mortars that at anything less than six miles distance can easily and quickly pierce the armor of any warship that floats. The Long Island coast is equally well armed, and at the Narrows big guns of high penetrative power have been multiplied as an almost superfluous precaution.

As to the Sound route Hell Gate is as terrible as the suggestion of its name to any floating thing with a warship draught of water. And for twenty miles beyond Hell Gate there are batteries and mines that

would simply laugh at any attempt of any warship to pass them.

Then we have monitors and mines and torpedoes, and tugs that could carry guns, and we have enough material ready at hand to line every inch of our shores with Zolinski guns capable of throwing from 200 to 1,000 pounds of dynamite a distance of two miles or more.

In brief, New York is as impregnable as Gibraltar itself. No fleet in the world could ever get near enough to throw a single shell to the Barge Office or the Produce Exchange. As for a landing and a land approach, a million volunteers would take good care of that.

GLASS PLATES THAT BEND.—In that curious old depository of monkish lore, the "Gesta Romanorum," Pliny tells a story about glass plates so cunningly annealed that they could be bent like tempered copper. This has been put down as a myth for centuries, but now it appears that Pliny was not so far off after all. A scientific exchange says that to-day the Chinese have the art of making pliable glass plates. They are not solid, but plaited from spun glass and made gorgeous by brilliant Oriental coloring. The strangest thing about them is that although they are made of glass, one can bend them backward and forward as if they were putty or pliable clay.

### Pleasure Resorts in Old New York.

New York Journal.

Speaking of the disappearance of old names in New York, how does it happen that so many places of amusement have been called gardens? Doubtless because the first pleasure resorts of the people were gardens, where there was at first a stand for music, then a concert hall and finally a theatre, which came to be shut in by having the rest of the garden ground covered with other structures. "Tea gardens" they used to be called in the last century, though the beverages served were not confined to "the cups that cheer, but not inebriate."

One of the earliest of these was the Chatham Garden, on what is now Park Row, from Pearl to Duane street. It was a social resort in the old colony times, with shaded walks and cozy nooks, but its concert pavilion was finally displaced by the Chatham Garden theatre. There was a Spring Garden, where the Astor House is, in which there was a house of entertainment that became the "Drovers' Inn." In those days of loyalty to the British Crown there was much aping of London in our nomenclature, and there was a Vauxhall at Warren and Greenwich streets and a Ranelagh just above Duane, west of Broadway, both Summer Gardens; but the Vauxhall Garden, which had a regular theatre, was a later institution. The original garden extended from Broadway to the Bowery, between Fourth street and Astor place, and included the ground where the Astor Library stands. It was badly cut up when Lafayette place was opened through it in 1825. Originally it was a real garden resort, with a music pavilion, and was kept by a Frenchman named Delacroix; but it came to have a popular Summer theatre of some note. It was there that David Poe, father of Edgar A., made his first appearance as an actor in New York.

William Niblo established one of these gardens where the attraction was music and tea or other refreshments, and the freedom of social converse in the open air. Its fate is still remembered, the garden disappeared under one of the finest of modern theatres and a big hotel, and yet until a late period the theatre was known as Niblo's Garden, though the last vestige of garden was a bit of courtyard deep down between the theatre and the Metropolitan Hotel. A big twelve story "store" building has obliterated the name, and threatens to wipe out the memory of Niblo's, where some of the great dramatic performances of the last generation took place.

We have seen the transforming of a garden into a music hall and theatre without losing its name, and under our eyes at Terrace Garden. Doubtless this kind of development has led to calling places gardens or garden theatres which never were anything of the kind, as the Winter Garden and Madison Square Garden. The gardens were the places at which musical entertainments developed especially, and were the progenitors of opera houses.

That reminds me of another relic that has disappeared in the last few years in the Astor Place Opera House. Before the present Clinton building was put up in Astor Place the old home of the Metropolitan Library showed the distinct lineaments of the first New York structure that was specially built for an opera house. They are only a fading memory now, but we ought to have some visible memorial of the first regular home of Italian opera in that city. Perhaps the tradition which is most lively about this first real opera house is the fierce riot in 1849, when the English Macready appeared there as Macbeth in direct rivalry with the American Forrest. It seems strange now that there should be a riot over that.

E. Heron Allen, who is just now attracting attention in England through his translations of Omar Khayyam, is well remembered in New York. He came to this country from England twelve or thirteen years ago and lectured on palmistry, attempting for the first time to make the diversion popular in New York.

## OUR FOREIGN NEWS.

Translated and Selected from leading European papers for the SENTINEL.

### ENGLAND.

#### RUSSIAN DEMANDS IN CHINA.

Russia has demanded that China shall surrender to her all sovereign rights over Port Arthur and the Liaowan Peninsula for the same term of years and on the same conditions as were granted to Germany in the case of Kiao Chou; also the right to construct a railway, under the same conditions as the Trans-Manchurian railway, from Petuna to Kwang chung, Mukden and Port Arthur. The demands were presented immediately after the ratification of the loan, five days being granted for a reply. In the event of non-compliance, Russia threatens to move troops into Manchuria.

#### Times—London, March 7.

The local question of our trade interests in the northern provinces of China, serious though it is, is not the main problem raised by the action of Russia. The practical transfer of Manchuria and Shingking to Russia must upset the existing balance of power in the Far East. The French, it would seem, have not been slow to perceive this fact, for on the day after the Russian demands were delivered the French representative is said to have made corresponding claims for "compensation" in the south. The acquisition of the northern provinces with Mukden, the cradle of the Chinese dynasty, must immeasurably increase the influence of Russia at Peking. Ever since 1895 that influence has been employed in a spirit of persistent hostility to the interests of England. Is this to be so in the future? Our policy in China has been emphatically proclaimed, and it has been warmly welcomed both by Japan and in the United States, while Germany professes to regard it with approval. Does Russia intend loyally to accept it, or is the step she has just taken an intimation that she means to repudiate and thwart it? We cannot allow our rights to be undermined or whittled away by any arrangements between China and other States.

#### Daily News—London, March 9.

There is no objection either to Russia's occupation of Port Arthur in itself, or to the railway facilities she demands. But it is that, so, what is the real nature of the crisis? The really vital points are two, one commercial the other political. The commercial point is security for rights at Port Arthur not less than we enjoy at other ports under existing treaties with China. If Russia were to show any stiff and unyielding attitude on this point, then the situation would become critical at once, and it must be confessed that such assurances as have already been given are lacking in precision. But the British Government has pledged itself before the world to use its full strength to secure this vital object, and in so doing it has received not only the strongest possible support from the opposition, but also the warm approval of public opinion in some other countries.

#### Vossische Zeitung.

To judge from England's attitude hitherto, it is hardly likely that the British Cabinet will suddenly have an attack of the old British love of fighting. England will, at most, seek to indemnify herself in Central China for Russian progress in the north. Petuna lies on the frontier of Manchuria and Kirin, South of Kirin lies Shengking, with its capital, Mukden, and the Peninsula of Liao-Tung, at the southern extremity of which is Port Arthur. Thus Russia really intends to acquire the whole territory between Manchuria, Korea, and the Russian coast province, an acquisition which would complete the dependence of Korea. The exclusive employment of Russian military instructors in Pechili, the province in which lie Tientsin and Peking, would considerably increase Russia's influence in China. Momentous as these changes may be for England, they are still more so for Japan. But it is hardly doubtful that Russia will gain her end if she shows energy, as she generally does. Meanwhile, France will probably take similar action in southern China. A great part of the Chinese Empire may, therefore, be partitioned, and yet the Chinese Emperor retain territory and people enough, and persist in the miserable misgovernment of hundreds of millions.

#### National Zeitung.

Contrary to expectation, the news of the Russian demands on China is causing some excitement in England. The papers think they involve so essential a shifting of the balance of power in Eastern Asia that England cannot allow it, and must either demand concessions elsewhere or secure the refusal of Russia's demands at all costs. These voices have been heard so often during the last six months that people are not likely to be shaken in their belief in the preservation of peace, not to mention that the demands in question have reference to Northern China, Russia's recognized sphere of interest. Meanwhile, the British Government is silent, for, as was stated in the Commons yesterday, it has received no confirmation of the news. The likelihood that Russia is co-operating in Northern China with France in Southern China and West Africa seems to irritate the British Press.

#### Berlin Post.

Russia is evidently urging compensatory claims in order not to be outstripped in the competition in the Far East among the European Powers, which after the conclusion of the Chinese loan with the Anglo-German Banks, the Russian Government, perhaps, felt constrained to fear. The above news, however, affords no ground for uneasiness. In view of Russia's friendly attitude towards

China, an amicable agreement between them is probable. Germany's action, moreover, does not deviate from the line marked out by the *entente* with Russia. As, moreover, differences between England and Germany in Eastern Asia have hitherto been avoided, international complications are not to be expected now.

#### Le Temps.

The British Cabinet is called upon to do its duty, and is adjured to oppose an absolute veto to over-hasty ambitions. What will it do? That is a secret of the gods. Will Lord Salisbury let his hand be forced? Will the influence of Mr. Chamberlain bring about the triumph of Imperialism, and let loose the danger of a general conflagration? No one knows, but it behooves everyone to realize all the gravity of the situation.

#### AMERICAN NATIONAL DEFENCE.

Morning Post—London, March 9.

The House of Representatives in Washington promptly followed up the resolution of the preceding day. The Committee of Ways and Means at once reported unanimously in favor of the proposal to place \$50,000,000 at the orders of the President for the purpose of national defence. Mr. Cannon, in supporting the resolution, was careful to disclaim anything in the nature of a threat. It was a peace measure he declared, and his language has every claim to unprejudiced consideration. Whatever opinion Europe may entertain as to the origin of the present complications between Spain and the United States, the resolution was a natural one in present circumstances. A considerable section of the American public has been for some years clamoring for the policy of coercing Spain. Two successive Presidents, in one degree or another, have countenanced the public demand, and all this time a large and, it is believed, predominant, portion of the Spanish nation has hurled defiance at their American critics. The disaster to the Maine has assuredly inflamed the passions of the anti-Spanish party in the Union, while the readiness with which the supposition of foul play has been accepted has increased the indignation of Spain. It is admitted that that country has been for some time improving her naval resources. Under these conditions the party of aggression at Washington naturally challenged the Government to say what it was doing in view of the possibility of war. These attacks have been turned by the business-like proceedings of the last two days. \* \* \* The De Lome letter and the Maine explosion have excited the susceptible American public, and their statesmen are determined to show that they are still on the crest of the wave, though they do not wish to force Spain into war. Much will depend on the way in which this resolution is received in Madrid. There are some indications that the many misfortunes which have attended Spanish policy have produced reflection, and of this declaration from martial and General Woodford has probably kept his chiefs at Washington well informed.

#### Daily News—London, March 9.

The presentation of the bill led to a remarkable scene of enthusiasm in the House, at which we need not wonder. There are modern tendencies in American politics to a rather reckless sort of spread-eagleism, which we do not profess to admire, and which Mr. McKinley admires no more than we do. But to strengthen the navy is legitimate patriotism, and will command the popular sympathy of the British public. For our part we find it impossible not to sympathize with American feeling on the subject of Cuba. The cruelties committed in that unfortunate island, and the misery inflicted upon its inhabitants, would move a heart of stone. They have resulted not so much from deliberate intention as from hopeless incompetence. General Weyler was, no doubt, guilty of brutal and pitiless severity. But General Weyler has been recalled, and we fully believe that the Government of Senor Sagasta are anxious to avoid the needless destruction of property or life. The plan is that Spain cannot manage Cuba, and that her failure, which may be no fault of hers, inflicts apparently endless suffering upon the native population. Americans would be more than human or less if they could look with equanimity upon such a mass of constant wretchedness within so short a distance of their own Southern States. This is no case of indefinitely extending the Monroe Doctrine, with which Mr. Cannon had quite as much to do as President Monroe. \* \* \* The unanimity of Congress, combined with the moderate language employed in debate, will have a wholesome and pacific effect upon enlightened and intelligent opinion.

#### PERSIA.

English Consular Journal.

In Persia, Russia is not only working against us politically, but also commercially. There is nothing strange in this, but as we are more at home perhaps in Persia than in other quarters of the world where we are exposed to the same hostile action, we should be better able, therefore, to look after our interests. Our influence in Persia is great, and we have always been on the best of terms with the Shahs. But even these advantages do not seem to secure us in the possession of trade. The British consul at Meshed writes: "There has been a hard struggle in Meshed, during the past ten years, between British and Russian cotton prints, the chief articles of foreign piece goods largely consumed and in great demand throughout Persia, and it is beyond doubt that the Russians have got the best of it. Though large quantities of English cotton prints were imported to Meshed from India via Bandar Abbas, and from England via Turkey, Tabriz and Teheran during the past three years, still they were less than those imported in recent years, and the imports of Russian cotton prints increased. Therefore, if nothing is done to improve the condition of the former, they will before long be driven out of the market altogether, as many other articles of English manufacture have been. Large consignments of English cotton prints imported during the past three years are lying unsold, and traders are now selling them at heavy losses, clear off their stock. \* \* \* During the year 1894-5, 13,325,000 worth of British and Indian piece goods passed on to Russian territory before the introduction of the new customs tariff in January, 1895, but since then nothing of British or Indian manufacture has been allowed to pass through the Russian custom house, and the only article of British manufacture imported to Russian territory through Meshed was 190,000 worth of muslin in 1896-7. The Russians have not succeeded in manufacturing muslin yet, and the requirements of the vast Central Asian market are still supplied by the British article, which is now imported into Central Asia direct from Bombay via Batum. The British and Indian manufacturers have so far had the monopoly of the sale of shirtings and sheetings. However, a competition has set in now, as the Russians have also begun to export these articles. By means of the new customs regulations, the Russians have managed to drive out Anglo-Indian shirtings and sheetings from Bokhara, where there was a large demand for them, but they have not yet been able to have their own way in Meshed, as Russian articles, though cheaper, are very inferior in quality, and are consequently not appreciated. This decline of trade is clearly a matter for the diplomatist to look into, as our manufacturers cannot fight against customs tariffs unaided. It is a fortunate circumstance for this country that so able a man as Sir Mortimer Durand represents Great Britain at the Court of Teheran, and now that he has resumed his duties, after a well earned rest, we look forward with confidence to his taking such action as will effectually protect and increase British trade with the Persian kingdom.

### THE DUKE OF SAXE COBURG HOISTING HIS FLAG.

Army and Navy Gazette.

The action of his Royal Highness in hoisting his flag as Admiral of the Fleet during a recent trip from Malta to Alexandria has excited some unfavorable comment. We are not aware whether or no his Royal Highness obtained formal permission from the Admiralty to act as he did on leaving Malta in the *Surprise*. The Duke boarded his ship in uniform, and his flag was hoisted. It is suggested that an irregularity was committed, and that hence the Royal Standard was substituted for the Jack when the *Surprise* reached Corfu. Now, in all probability, as it seems to us, the Duke merely wore his uniform and hoisted his flag as a compliment to his many friends in the navy, so that it seems quite unnecessary to split straws over the matter and pretend that the action could have affected the authority of the Commander-in-Chief of the station. The substitution of the Royal Standard for the Jack confirms this impression, and need by no means be taken as an admission of error on the part of his Royal Highness. The position of the Duke of Coburg is certainly a peculiar one. He is at once a foreign potentate and a British Admiral of the Fleet on the active list of a navy in which he has ceased to serve, but his affection for the Royal Navy is unchanged, we are convinced; and who knows but what his services might again be placed at the disposal of his native country?

### TWO NEW WEAPONS FOR THE FRENCH ARMY.

The French small arms factories have received orders to be ready at once to begin the manufacturing of rifles of a new model. Two new weapons have been tested by the chief officers of the Normal Firing School, and have been found superior to the modified Lebel rifle now in use. Their ballistic qualities are said to be marvellous. The publication of this item of intelligence is probably due to the announcement that the German infantry is to be rearmed with a new rifle of 6 millimetres calibre superior to the present weapon of 7.9 millimetres. It is not, however, believed that this change in the French army is likely to be made in the immediate future, as it would cost at least £8,000,000. When Germany begins manufacturing so will France. The present French rifle is considered to be slightly superior to the present German.

### Notes of Interest.

SOFT SOAP FOR HEAVY SEAS.—The steamship *Gera*, recently arrived from Bremen, had a rather novel experience in calming a storm while in mid-ocean. Head winds and high seas caused considerable damage on shipboard and finally rendered her almost completely unmanageable. Then Captain Meissel decided to resort to oil to calm the troubled waters. It was allowed to flow out through a drain pipe on the side about 50 feet abut the bow. No immediate effect was noticed. Then the captain bethought him of a quantity of soft soap which, he reasoned, would answer the same purpose as the oil. Four gallons of it were brought into requisition, and this, with two gallons of lubricating oil, was allowed to percolate into the sea. After three or four hours the waters became less boisterous in the vicinity of the vessel. This was continued till the wind and sea moderated.

Phil May, the English artist, who has succeeded Du Maurier on *Punch*, began life by doing odd jobs in a Leeds theatre, at a salary of twelve shillings a week. His income is now reckoned in the thousands.

Verdi, the Italian composer, charges \$1 for an